

**Shrewsbury Public Schools**  
**Sherwood Middle School Summer Reading List 2015**

Students are asked to read three novels over the summer. The list below contains titles that are recommended for early middle-level readers. If the list does not contain a novel that suits a students' interest or reading level, please see the recommended author's section at the bottom of the page for more suggestions!

**New and notable – 2015 American Library Association Award Winners**

**El Deafo** by Cece Bell - ***Newbery Honor Book***

Going to school and making new friends can be tough. But going to school and making new friends while wearing a bulky hearing aid strapped to your chest? That requires superpowers! In this funny, poignant graphic novel memoir, author/illustrator Cece Bell chronicles her hearing loss at a young age and her experiences with the Phonic Ear, a very powerful—and very awkward—hearing aid.

**Rain Reign** by Ann M. Martin – ***Middle School Schneider Family Book Award***

Rose Howard is obsessed with homonyms. She's thrilled that her own name is a homonym, and she purposely gave her dog Rain a name with two homonyms (Reign, Rein. Not everyone understands Rose's obsessions, her rules, and the other things that make her different. She struggles to control the obsessions and outbursts that are symptomatic of her high-functioning autism. When a storm hits their rural town, rivers overflow, the roads are flooded, and Rain goes missing. Rose's father shouldn't have let Rain out. Now Rose has to find her dog, even if it means leaving her routines and safe places to search.

**Brown Girl Dreaming** by Jacqueline Woodson – ***Newbery Honor Book, Coretta Scott King Book Award, Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Award, National Book Award***

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Woodson's eloquent poetry reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child.

**Adventure**

Level One:

**Any title from The Everest Series: The Contest, The Climb, The Summit** by Gordon Korman

The climbing contest to see who will be the youngest person to climb Mount Everest turns into a life or-death rescue mission.

**Mr. Tucket** (or any other book in the "Tucket" Series) by Gary Paulsen

In 1848, while on a wagon train headed for Oregon, fourteen-year-old Francis Tucket is kidnapped by Pawnee Indians and then falls in with a one-armed trapper who teaches him how to live in the wild. (Other titles include: Call Me Francis Tucket, Tucket's Gold, Tucket's Home, and Tucket's Ride.)

**Little House in the Big Woods, Little House on the Prairie** by Laura Ingalls Wilder

The first two stories about Laura Ingalls and her family. The Ingalls family travels by covered wagon across the Midwest in the 1870's first settling in Wisconsin then moving to Kansas.

Level Two:

**Brian's Winter, Brian's Return, and Brian's Hunt** by Gary Paulsen

These three books are sequels to Hatchet.

**On the Banks of Plum Creek** by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Laura and her family move to Minnesota where they live in a dugout until a new house is built and face misfortunes caused by flood, blizzard, and grasshoppers.

**Jason's Gold** by Will Hobbs

Fifteen-year-old Jason embarks on a ten thousand-mile journey in 1897 in hopes of striking it rich after hearing the news that gold has been discovered in Canada's Yukon Territory.

### Level Three:

#### **Hatchet** by Gary Paulsen

After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the wilderness, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce.

#### **Canyons** by Gary Paulsen

Finding a skull on a camping trip in the canyons outside El Paso, Texas, Brennan becomes involved with the fate of a young Apache Indian who lived in the late 1800s.

#### **My Side of the Mountain** by Jean Craighead George

A young boy relates his adventures during the year he spends living alone in the Catskill Mountains including his struggle for survival, his dependence on nature, his animal friends, and his ultimate realization that he needs human companionship.

### **Graphic Novels**

#### Any Level:

#### **Zita the Spacegirl.** By Ben Hatke, Illus. by the author. First Second.

When a little red button crashes to earth any self-respecting graphic novel character would push it. When Joseph is whisked through an inter-dimensional portal to an alien planet, Zita follows to rescue him.

### **Fantasy**

#### Level One:

#### **The Boggart** by Susan Cooper

After visiting the castle in Scotland, which her family has inherited, and returning home to Canada, twelve-year-old Emily finds that she has accidentally brought back with her a boggart, an invisible and mischievous spirit with a fondness for practical jokes.

#### **Princess Sonora and the Long Sleep** by Gail Carson Levine

In this retelling of the fairy tale Sleeping Beauty, Princess Sonora, who is ten times smarter than anyone else, vows to choose for herself the best time to be pricked by the spindle.

#### **The Wish** by Gail Levine

When granted her wish to be the most popular girl in school, Wilma, an eighth grader, forgets that she will graduate in three weeks and her popularity will vanish.

#### Level Two:

#### **Ella Enchanted** by Gail Levine

In this novel based on the story of Cinderella, Ella struggles against the childhood curse that forces her to obey any order given to her.

#### **The Lightning Thief** (or any book in this series) by Rick Riordan

The escapades of the Greek gods and heroes get a fresh spin in the first book in the Percy Jackson and the Olympians series, about a contemporary 12-year-old New Yorker who learns he's a demigod. Perseus, aka Percy Jackson, thinks he has big problems. His father left before he was born, he's been kicked out of six schools in six years, he's dyslexic, and he has ADHD. What a surprise when he finds out that that's only the tip of the iceberg: he vaporizes his pre-algebra teacher, learns his best friend is a satyr, and is almost killed by a minotaur before his mother manages to get him to the safety of Camp Half-Blood--where he discovers that Poseidon is his father.

#### **Books from the 'Redwall' series** by Brian Jacques

#### Level Three:

#### **Splendors and Glooms**, by Laura Amy Schlitz

The master puppeteer, Gaspere Grisini, is so expert at manipulating his stringed puppets that they appear alive. Clara Wintermute, the only child of a wealthy doctor, is spellbound by Grisini's act and invites him to entertain at her birthday party. When Clara vanishes that night, suspicion of kidnapping falls upon the puppeteer and, by

association, Lizzie Rose and Parsefall. As they seek to puzzle out Clara's whereabouts, Lizzie and Parse uncover Grisini's criminal past and wake up to his evil intentions. Fleeing London, they find themselves caught in a trap set by Grisini's ancient rival, a witch with a deadly inheritance to shed before it's too late.

**Golden Compass** by Philip Pullman

Accompanied by her daemon, Lyra Belacqua sets out to prevent her best friend and other kidnapped children from becoming the subject of gruesome experiments in the Far North.

**Wrinkle in Time** by Madeline L'Engle

Three extraterrestrial beings take Meg and her friends to another world.

## **Science Fiction**

### Level Three:

**Ender's Game** by Orson Scott Card

Ender, who is the result of genetic experimentation, may be the military genius Earth needs in its war against an alien enemy.

**Any Science Fiction book by Nancy Farmer**

## **Realistic Fiction**

### Levels One, Two, and Three:

Any '**Alex Ryder Adventure**' by Anthony Horowitz

### Level One:

**Junonia.** By Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow Books.

Alice knows just how her vacation on Sanibel Island should be: the same as the previous nine, except that this year she hopes to find a rare junonia shell. Alice's tenth birthday, however, brings unexpected changes.

**Judy Moody** by Megan McDonald (any book in the series)

Third grader Judy Moody is in a first day of school bad mood until she gets an assignment to create a collage all about herself and begins creating her masterpiece, the Me collage.

**Heads or Tails** by Jack Gantos - Jack's diary helps him deal with his problems that include dog-eating alligators, a terror for an older sister, a younger brother who keeps breaking parts of himself, and next-door neighbors who are really weird.

**The Landry News: A Brand New School Story** by Andrew Clements

A fifth-grader starts a newspaper with an editorial that prompts her burnt-out classroom teacher to really begin teaching again, but he is later threatened with disciplinary action as a result.

**The Jacket** by Andrew Clements

Sixth-grader Phil comes to an awareness of his own racial prejudice after he sees Daniel, an African-American boy, wearing his brother's one-of-a-kind jacket and leaps to the conclusion that Daniel has stolen the coat.

### Level Two:

**Breaking Stalin's Nose.** By Eugene Yelchin, Illus. by the author, Henry Holt.

On the eve of his induction into the Young Pioneers, Sasha's world is overturned when his father is arrested by Stalin's guard. (A 2012 Newbery Honor Book)

**The Higher Power of Lucky** (also, Lucky Breaks) by Susan Patron

Fearing that her legal guardian plans to abandon her to return to France, ten-year-old aspiring scientist Lucky Trimble determines to run away while also continuing to seek the Higher Power that will bring stability to her life.

**The Middle of Somewhere** by J.B. Cheaney

Twelve-year-old Ronnie loves organization, especially because her brother has attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, but traveling with their grandfather who is investigating wind power in Kansas brings some pleasant, if chaotic, surprises.

**Emmy and the Incredible Shrinking Rat** by Lynne Jonell

When Emmy discovers that she and her formerly loving parents are being drugged by their evil nanny with rodent potions that can change people in frightening ways, she and some new friends must try everything possible to return things to normal.

**Rules** by Cynthia Lord

Growing up with a brother with autism, twelve-year-old Catherine struggles to come to her own understanding of what it means to be "normal".

**Walk Two Moons** by Sharon Creech

After her mother leaves home suddenly, thirteen-year-old Sal and her grandparents take a car trip retracing her mother's route. Along the way, Sal recounts the story of her friend Phoebe, whose mother also left.

**The View From Saturday** by E.L. Konigsburg

Four students, with their own individual stories, develop a special bond and attract the attention of their teacher, a paraplegic, who chooses them to represent their sixth-grade class in the Academic Bowl competition.

**Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key** by Jack Gantos

Joey Pigza can't sit still. He can't pay attention, he can't follow the rules, and he can't help it - especially when his meds aren't working. Joey's had problems ever since he was born, problems just like his dad and grandma have.

**Shiloh** by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

The story of Marty, a boy who finds a lost beagle in the hills behind his West Virginia home, and tries to hide the animal from its real owner, a mean-spirited man known to shoot deer out of season and to mistreat dogs.

**Beetles Lightly Toasted** by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Andy's entering the fifth-grade essay contest stirs his imagination to creative heights as he competes with his know-it-all cousin by making recipes with some unusual food sources and testing them on unaware friends and family.

**Hoot** by Carl Hiaasen

Roy Eberhart, the new kid in town, hooks up with teenage runaway Mullet Fingers (so named because he can catch fish with his bare hands) and his sister Beatrice, a "major soccer jock...with a major attitude." The three discover that the proposed site for a Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House is also a nesting ground for small burrowing owls, a protected species, and they attempt to halt construction, initiating a cover-up that reaches all the way to the mayor's office.

Level Three:

**Dead End in Norvelt.** By Jack Gantos. Farrar Straus Giroux.

An achingly funny romp through a dying New Deal town. While mopping up epic nose bleeds, Jack narrates this screw-ball mystery in an endearing and believable voice. (2012 Newbery Medal Book)

**Inside Out and Back Again.** By Thanhha Lai. HarperCollins.

Hà and her family flee war-torn Vietnam for the American South. In spare, vivid verse, she chronicles her struggle to find her place in a new world. (A 2012 Newbery Honor Book)

**The Year of the Dog** by Grace Lin

Frustrated at her seeming lack of talent for anything, a young Taiwanese American girl sets out to apply the lessons of the Chinese Year of the Dog, those of making best friends and finding oneself, to her own life.

**Historical Fiction**

Level One:

**The Secret Soldier: the story of Deborah Sampson** by Ann McGovern

This biography features a woman who disguised herself as a man and joined the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

**War Comes to Willy Freeman** by James Lincoln Collier

A free thirteen-year-old black girl in Connecticut is caught up in the horror of the Revolutionary War and the danger of being returned to slavery when her patriot father is killed by the British and her mother disappears.

Level Two:

**Nurse, Soldier, Spy: The Story of Sarah Edmonds, a Civil War Hero**, by Marissa Moss

The incredible life story of Sarah Edmonds, who fought for the Union army disguised as a man and later became the only woman recognized as a Civil War veteran.

**Lunch-Box Dream**, by Tony Abbott

Narrated from different perspectives, this is a moving tale about the North and South during the era of Jim Crow, through the experiences of two young boys, one white and one black.

**The Devil's Arithmetic** by Jane Yolen

Hannah resents stories of her Jewish heritage and of the past until, when opening the door during a Passover Seder, she finds herself in Poland during World War II where she experiences the horrors of a concentration camp, and learns why she-- and we--need to remember the past.

**Girl in Blue** by Ann Rinaldi

To escape an abusive father and an arranged marriage, fourteen-year-old Sarah, dressed as a boy, leaves her Michigan home to enlist in the Union Army, and becomes a soldier on the battlefields of Virginia as well as a Union spy working in the house of Confederate sympathizer Rose O'Neal Greenhow in Washington, D.C.

**Jump Ship to Freedom** by James Lincoln Collier

By rights young Daniel Arabus and his mother, slaves in Captain Iver's house in Stratford, Conn., should be free. But the Captain refuses to honor their agreement and instead sells Daniel on board a ship to the West Indies.

Level Three:

**May B** by Caroline Starr Rose

May is helping out on a neighbor's Kansas prairie homestead. She wants to contribute, but it's hard to be separated from her family by 15 long, unfamiliar miles. Then the unthinkable happens: May is abandoned. Trapped in a tiny snow-covered sod house, isolated from family and neighbors, May must prepare for the oncoming winter. While fighting to survive, May's memories of her struggles with reading at school come back to haunt her. But she's determined to find her way home again.

**The Cheshire Cheese Cat: A Dickens of a Tale.** By Carmen Agra Deedy and Randall Wright, Illus. by Barry Moser. Peachtree Publishers.

Alley-cat Skillee finds a perfect home, gets help from a friend to return an injured raven to the Tower of London and saves all the Cheshire Cheese Inn mice from the evil Pinch.

**Catherine Called Birdy** by Karen Cushman

The daughter of an English country knight keeps a journal in which she records the events of her life, particularly her longing for adventures beyond the usual role of women and her efforts to avoid being married off.

**Wild Man Island** – by Will Hobbs – After fourteen-year-old Andy slips away from his kayaking group to visit the wilderness site of his archaeologist father's death, a storm strands him on Admiralty Island, Alaska, where he manages to survive, encounters unexpected animal and human inhabitants, and looks for traces of the earliest prehistoric immigrants to America.

**Lyddie** by Katherine Patterson

Impoverished Vermont farm girl Lyddie Worthen is determined to gain her independence by becoming a factory worker in Lowell, Massachusetts, in the 1840s.

**Number the Stars** by Lois Lowry

In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis.

## **Mystery**

### Level One:

**The Dollhouse Murders** by Betty Ren Wright

A dollhouse filled with a ghostly light in the middle of the night, and dolls that have moved from where she last left them, lead Amy and her mentally handicapped sister to unravel the mystery surrounding grisly murders that took place years ago.

**Any Chet Gecko Mystery** by Bruce Hale

"Those who haven't read a 'Chet Gecko' mystery don't know what they're missing." School Library Journal

**Any mystery by John Bellairs**

### Level Two:

**The Puzzling World of Winston Breen**, by Eric Berlin

**Holes** by Louis Sachar

As further evidence of his family's bad fortune, which they attribute to a curse on a distant relative, Stanley Yelnats is sent to a hellish correctional camp in the Texas desert where he finds his first real friend, a treasure, and a new sense of himself.

**Chasing Vermeer** by Blue Balliett

When seemingly unrelated and strange events start to happen and a precious Vermeer painting disappears, eleven-year-olds Petra and Calder combine their talents to solve an international art scandal.

**Room One: A Mystery or Two** by Andrew Clements

In small-town Platttsford, Nebraska, sixth-grade paperboy/Boy Scout/4-H-er/mystery buff Ted Hammond secretly befriends a girl who is hiding with her mother and brother in an abandoned farmhouse. When they disappear, Ted must figure out what happened.

**Any mystery by Joan Nixon**

### Level Three:

**Wonderstruck** by Brian Selznick

Parallel stories of hearing-impaired characters are set 50 years apart. The journeys of these two characters are chronicled in unique and creative ways. One journey is told through prose while the other is described by exceptional illustrations.

**The Invention Of Hugo Cabret** by Brian Selznick

When twelve-year-old Hugo, an orphan living and repairing clocks within the walls of a Paris train station in 1931, meets a mysterious toy seller and his goddaughter, his undercover life and his biggest secret are jeopardized. This book won the 2008 Caldecott Medal.

## **Poetry**

### Level Two:

**The Dream Keeper** by Langston Hughes

A collection of sixty-six poems, selected by the author for young readers, including lyrical poems, songs, and blues, many exploring the black experience.

### Level Three:

**The Place My Words are Looking For** by Paul Janeczko

Thirty-nine United States poets share their poems, inspirations, thoughts, anecdotes, and memories.

## **Traditional**

### Level Two:

**Gilgamesh the Hero** by Geraldine McCaughrean -In this version of the epic, the mythic strongman, whose unrestrained vigor in building his city makes him more tyrant than hero, battles with Enkidu, a "wild man" who signifies the natural, uncivilized world. The two become friends and join in heroic adventures.

**Soft Rain, A Story of the Cherokee Trail of Tears** by Cornelia Cornelissen

A nine-year-old Cherokee girl, is forced to relocate, along with her family, from North Carolina to the West.

Level Three:

**One Thousand and One Arabian Nights** by Geraldine McCaughrean -Collection of stories told by Shahrazad to her husband King Shahryar in an effort to keep him from having her put to death she tells tales of Sinbad, Ali Baba, and other characters of the desert world.

**Non-Fiction**

Level Two:

**Zombie Makers: True Stories of Nature's Undead** by Rebecca L. Johnson

Are zombies real? Scientists know this for sure: dead people do not come back to live and start walking around, looking for trouble. But there are things that can take over the bodies and brains of innocent creatures, turning them into senseless slaves. Meet nature's zombie makers--including a fly-enslaving fungus, a suicide worm, and a cockroach-taming wasp--and their victims.

**Into the Unknown: How Great Explorers Found Their Way by Land, Sea, and Air.** By Stuart Ross, Illus. by Stephen Biesty

How did those great explorers travel? What did they wear? Where did they pee? And what did they find on their journeys? Much is revealed in the text and unfolding cross-sections of this fascinating volume.

Level Three:

**Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream** by Tanya Lee Stone

Profiles thirteen women who challenged social norms and government policies to prove they could be exceptional astronauts

**Born to Write: The Remarkable Lives of Six Famous Authors** by Charis Cotter

Looks at the childhoods of six celebrated authors, including Madeleine L'Engle, E. B. White, L. M. Montgomery, Philip Pullman, Christopher Paul Curtis, and C. S. Lewis, and discusses how their youthful experiences influenced their writing.

**Autobiography**

Level Two:

**Knots in My Yo-yo String,** Autobiography of a Kid by Jerry Spinelli

This Italian-American Newbery Medalist presents a humorous account of his childhood and youth in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

**My Life in Dog Years** by Gary Paulsen

The author describes how dogs have impacted his life from childhood through the present day, recounting the stories of his first dog, Snowball, in the Philippines; Dirk, who protected him from bullies; and Cookie, who saved his life.

**Looking Back: A Book of Memories** by Lois Lowry

Using family photographs and quotes from her books, the author provides glimpses into her life.

Recommended Authors – The following authors are also great for middle level readers!: Avi, C.S.

Lewis, Robert Newton Peck, Lloyd Alexander, Sharon Creech, Gary Paulsen, Katherine Paterson, John Bellairs, E.L.Konigsburg, T.M. Murphy, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, Jane Yolen, Patricia McLachlan, Scott O'Dell, Betsy Byars, Paul Zindel, James Lincoln Collier & Christopher Collier, J.K.Rowling. Kathryn Lasky, Louis Sacher, Russel Freedman, Walter Dean Meyers, Mildred Taylor

